

Saturday, 26th June, 2004

## (MORNING SESSION)

IN THE CHAIR - MR IAN LAVERY,  
(CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS)

### **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

Comrades, Conference, it gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's address at this NUM Biennial Conference. I must say that it is one of the proudest moments of my life. Yes, the coal industry has been literally hammered and continuously slaughtered by successive governments, but as a trade union – the

NUM – we have always been at the front fighting for social justice, fighting for our industry and fighting for our class.

As a Union we have been through the most difficult of times. We have been through those times together: through times of struggle, times of hardship and times of sorrow and often pain, but we have survived, albeit in much smaller numbers but we have survived with equal passion and equal commitment to the labour and trade union movement.

The past few years have, as this Union warned, been a disaster for our indigenous deep mine coal industry. The predictions and views expressed by the NUM National Executive Committee, led by Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and Mick McGahey, back in 1984/85 were true. A wholesale rundown of our coal industry to ripen it off for its ultimate privatisation, and this was the only objective of the Tory government led by that evil extremist, Margaret Thatcher.

I have taken great delight on many occasions in just reading [this](#) letter, a letter sent to every mineworker on strike, from Ian MacGregor, on NCB headed notepaper. I just want to read a little bit of what MacGregor said in his letter. It says: "*Your Future in Danger.*" Well let's be honest, that is why we were on strike 20 years ago; we knew that. This was June 1984. He says:

*"This is a strike which should never have happened. It is based on very serious misrepresentation and distortion of the facts. At great financial cost miners have supported the strike for fourteen weeks because your leaders have told you this.*

*That the Coal Board is out to butcher the coal industry.*

*That we plan to do away with 70,000 jobs.*

*That we plan to close down around 86 pits, leaving only 100 working collieries."*

Then this is in bold:

***"If these things were true I would not blame miners for getting angry or for being deeply worried. But these things are absolutely untrue. I state that categorically and solemnly. You have been deliberately misled."***

Well there's one for the books because after 20 years we all know who was doing the misleading and the misrepresenting, and it certainly was not the National Union of Mineworkers.

If MacGregor and Thatcher had adhered to what was said in that letter then this industry would still be thriving. We should always remember that it was the Union that told the truth, the leadership of the Union that took you through the strike. They were correct then and they are even more correct now when you look at the history of it.

Look to the Thatcher legacy – and I have said this at many rallies up and down the country – Thatcher can be very easily put in the same line as Adolf Hitler. There are striking similarities, because when Hitler marched into Europe he razed many communities to the ground. He killed the people. The idea was for generations to come not to understand what happened: the villages were not there, the towns were not there, the people were not there. Thatcher would of course have done exactly the same. She would have loved to have been able to carry out the same sort of massacre on the miners and their families if indeed she believed she could have gotten away with it.

But what Thatcher did was similar in many ways: she starved the communities. She wanted future generations to remember what happens if a union like the National Union of Mineworkers, or if the workers as a class, take on the State, how the State can mobilise against ordinary people. What Thatcher did starved the communities of any economic regeneration, any job creation and any hope and any vision. She ensured that the heart was torn from the mining towns and villages. It could be perfectly described as a type of major surgery without anaesthetic, to maximise the pain, without any medication, to continue the pain, and certainly without any aftercare. This was the Thatcher plan, they hate and they detest everything we have ever stood for and everything we will ever stand for.

Our towns and villages suffer greatly as we sit here today. Money has been poured into regional regeneration companies, such as Yorkshire Forward, but experience shows this will have very little impact on the people's livelihood in those areas. Monies, comrades, should be pumped into the industry, to retain the industry which we have and build upon it, to maintain the skills which we have and build upon it, the skills which, people will not need reminding, have been built up over two centuries and more.

What we see in the communities at this time, in these mining communities where people quite rightly and quite proudly express the view that they used to leave their doors open, their windows open because of the friendship and the comradeship and the tight-knit communities which once prevailed throughout the coal industry, what we see now is high crime, a huge increase, and record levels of teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, debt, violence, all now common but they were not there before. Comrades, this is the Thatcher legacy.

I must mention the 1984-85 dispute. It is 20 years ago. We all know why we took the action and we were right because what we said would happen now has happened, probably a lot worse than we ever did envisage. Just spare a thought at this Conference, 20 years on, for miners who were killed on the picket lines supporting the Union. I mention Joe Green and Dave Jones and others that were killed, who were only trying to promote a better society and create a better society for future generations. 20,000 miners were hospitalised, thousands arrested, thousands convicted and hundreds jailed. There were 1,200 who were sacked and victimised, many who have not been able to gain any employment since.

Some people say we won the strike. Well let me tell you, I will not be putting that one to the vote today. I have heard people say we won the strike, some people say we lost the strike, some people say we learned a lot from the strike – a lot of different views on what did happen – but we did as a matter of fact learn many lessons from that dispute. We learned how to love and hate, we learned the spirit of friendship, hardship, comradeship and we encountered brutality, victimisation, discrimination and corruption on a scale never seen before within our movement, but comrades we should be extremely proud that we did it. The only other option would have been to roll over and die at the feet of Tory Government. We should be extremely proud, and I am sure we all are, that we stood up at that point of time, it took a year, and we actually did it – more than a lot of people will ever be able to say about the movement.

But some things never change, and the butchery of the industry continues. We have UK Coal, probably the worst employer the industry has ever experienced. They haven't tried to hide anything. They haven't tried to hide the future, the future as they see it for their shareholders. Their future is as industrial landlords, not in any way, shape or form involved in the coal industry. At this point in time they are looking to close the Selby Coalfield very shortly. It is in an ideally situated area geographically,

the infrastructure is there, and what they will be looking for, not just at Selby but the rest of the pits, as the pits close, because that is their intention, is to claim money from the government for redundancy payments, and then they will claim money from the government to redevelop the land, to knock the sites down, the pitheads down, and redevelop them. Then they will ask the government for further finances to build factories. Then they will ask the government for further finances to employ people in those factories because they will be unemployment black spots because they closed the pits beforehand, and then they will operate as an industrial landlord.

Let me tell you, this is not Ian Lavery thinking. They have been challenged on it and they have accepted that that is their vision for the future. Haslam said to Steve and I not so very many months ago, *"Stop calling it a coal industry, it is not a coal industry"*. I said *"Excuse me?"* He said, *"It is not a coal industry, it is a coal business. We as a company have no commitment to coal, we have got a commitment to the shareholders"*. We have conveyed this message to senior ministers such as Stephen Timms, we have conveyed it to the Labour Party and anybody else who cares to listen about UK Coal's future, but believe me, until UK Coal are brought into line and until the government takes control of the coal industry instead of privateers, we will make no movement whatsoever with a firm like UK Coal.

I mentioned Selby before. The Selby project was estimated to produce in excess of 10 million tonnes per annum. The Barnsley seam alone had an estimated 600 million tonnes reserves – that is at least 60 years. UK Coal's reassessment of the reserves and resources proved quite different. Let me explain it to you, because I am not sure people are fully aware of what UK Coal has been able to do and been allowed to do. 600 million tonnes in the Barnsley seam at Selby, but it is not there any more. It hasn't been cut, hasn't been extracted, hasn't been produced. UK Coal have been able to say, and get away with it, that a lot of those reserves they would not make enough profit from, their view, so they have been able to reassess these reserves and recategorise them, reclassify them as what they call resources. So we haven't got reserves any more, we've got reserves and resources. UK Coal has been allowed to do that. We have had a number of meetings with them and claimed that they were not entitled to do that but they have done it.

IMC, that is the Independent Mining Consultants who have drafted numerous reports on the industry, they have allowed that to happen and used that as well. On 16th July 2002 UK Coal announced the closure of Selby, and they used the facts and figures of IMC and IMC used the facts and figures of UK Coal. If I was in charge of a business and I wanted it closed, I would make sure that the facts and figures stacked up. If the government wanted an independent report surely it should have been independent, but it wasn't you see. The report on Selby and on the industry as a whole was done by IMC using the company's statistics and facts and figures. There is no independence at all in IMC's reports.

The NUM employed a firm in London, NERA, and they had a good look at the Selby coalfield and produced what I thought was a superb report, basically saying that Selby could survive, not a problem, Selby could survive. There would need to be cost reductions, which there are anyway. What they did say was there would have to be new ownership because they realised that under the present ownership there would not be a chance of Selby surviving because they did not have the will for it to survive. They said that there would be a need for some form of initial funding, £25-30 million, and they said there would need to be a new contract at Gascoigne Wood. You should see some of these contracts, comrades, I bet you'd wish you had them with UK Coal I can assure you.

But that in itself would have been enough to save the jewel in the crown, to save Selby. It was dismissed. We launched the report in Parliament. We took the report to the Secretary of State and to Labour Ministers and anybody else who we believed could have an influence on the retention of the Selby coalfield. Comrades, you will need no reminding, Selby closes soon.

We still as a Union believe at this very late stage that the coal reserves should not be sterilised. Circumstances have dramatically changed again, as we predicted. World coal prices are at an eleven year high at £1.57 per gigajoule. Selby in some weeks have been producing at less than 70 pence per gigajoule. Riccall is making a profit at this point in time of in excess of £2 million a week. Selby is to close, comrades. From privatisation until 1999-2000 huge profits were made at the Selby complex. The closure of Whitmoor and North Selby in 1997 saw production reduced from the estimated 10 million to 5.2 million tonnes by roundabout 1998.

People here are very much aware of the management style of UK Coal. The fact that they are asking every colliery to impose a one face system automatically means that there will be months of lack of profit and lack of any sort of coal production built into their budgets. Now that is absolutely crazy. There should not be any colliery operating on a one face basis. It is the road to nowhere, and again we took this to UK Coal and they have got a strange team there, they've got a Tinsley and a Betts and a whole number of people who just look, and I'm sure they understand and agree but it certainly isn't happening. The management style quite frankly is appalling, it hasn't changed since British Coal and the National Coal Board.

Comrades, we are all agreed Selby was the jewel in the crown. The money that was poured into the development of Selby, paid by the taxpayers, by you and I, was phenomenal, and to allow a private company to be able to sterilise the reserves is nothing short of criminal. It would be a vote winner to take the industry back into public ownership. That is what people are looking for, some sort of strong leadership in our areas, in the heartlands. It would be a vote winner like many others. We are not likely to see that happen.

I mentioned the fact that Selby was a huge profit maker. But UK Coal set out their vision as I have explained and their vision is not to be in the coal market. They have not at any time taken any cognisance of the lives which they have destroyed of the members of this Union and other people. They have not at any time considered family life and social life. For £20-25 million Selby could still be in operation at this moment in time, if indeed we could agree and we certainly agreed with the NERA report.

When we say £25-30 million, Yorkshire Forward, the regeneration company I think got £69 million for regeneration. The reason they got that money was to try and get unemployed people back into employment. My maths might not be brilliant, but if they had given that money to the industry and created like the NUM asked a company similar to Railtrack under central government control, gave them that money, everybody in Selby would still be employed and would be looking forward to a long history within the mining industry, and that is where the money should have been put. *(Applause)* It isn't any good saying the money is not there, because the money is there.

Comrades, I sometimes laugh at these cosy relationships, and laugh really out of desperation. The cosy relationship with UK Coal and the Coal Authority, and dare I say it some, or one or two, Labour MPs in the Selby area who instead of fighting for the retention of the industry were actually undermining the Union and trying to gain redundancy payments before UK Coal had even mentioned the fact that they were

to close Selby, that cannot be allowed to happen. People need to demonstrate against this sort of thing. Labour MPs are there to ensure and should have been there to ensure that this complex continued.

John Grogan wasn't, and I promised not to mention any names.

What about David Douglass's pit? What about Hatfield/Thorne? Every pit they closed UK Coal said *"Look at the report, at what IMC is saying. The resources are there but not the reserves"*. The Government is saying the same, that we have got to listen to this report. What IMC said about Thorne is it was probably the best project in Britain, had tremendous reserves of varying thicknesses and decent quality and it had the largest reserve base in the UK. Davey assures me that it is in excess of 100 million tonnes. Richard Budge, Coal Power, had Section 36 approval. They had planning permission for two 450 megawatt power stations, clean coal technology, state of the art, all on one site. It's closing. UK Coal's role in this is absolutely appalling. How these people have been given this power to dictate to us what our energy requirements will be in the future is absolutely beyond me. What they have done is they are looking to fill the shafts, if it hasn't already been done, at Thorne. The shafts will be filled and the reserves will be totally sterilised. There's a classic tale, comrades, whether we like it or not, of the tail wagging the dog.

And just to mention those people at Hatfield, miners working for eight weeks without a penny in their pay. Eight weeks – this is 2004 for goodness sake – and it's a credit to those men who believed that there would be some resolution to the problem in Hatfield and Thorne that they did that, and it is a credit to the NUM, which played a magnificent role there in ensuring that the men at least did what they thought was the right thing to ensure the colliery's future.

Look at Kellingley and the flexible working issue. I like discussing this flexible work because it is not flexible working. Haslam agreed it's not flexible working. Flexible working, the government have made a big play of flexible working, it is so people can enjoy more social life, see their kids. There was an advert in the *Guardian* not so many weeks ago where there is a child on a swing and his father is pushing him, enjoying themselves, saying *"This is what flexible working is about"*. I met Stephen Timms in his office and I took the advert and said what they should be doing is putting the miner in the swing and getting the kiddie to push his father, because flexible working arrangements in the industry are quite different to what the government's perception is. People have got to recognise that. What flexible working at Kellingley is, *"You'll work when we tell you to work and you'll be off when we tell you're off."*

The whole idea of introducing flexible working was to do away with the five day agreement. Once that agreement was broken they could do anything they wanted and there would be very little in terms of redress that the men in Kellingley could do. Norman Haslam phoned Steve Kemp up and he said – I'm not going to try and imitate his accent by the way – he said *"We want flexible working here at Kellingley. How are we going to do that, Steve?"* and Steve said, *"I don't think you'll get it"*, and he said – *"we are going to stuff it up them like we stuffed it up them at Maltby."* That is what Norman Haslam said.

That's the man in charge of UK Coal. That's the way he treats people, those were his exact words and Steve Kemp was the man who was on the other end of the telephone. These are the people, sadly, we are having to deal with.

Look at what happened at Kellingley. It wasn't the NUM National Executive Committee asking for any action, it was the men, led by the officials who did a

tremendous job throughout the whole of that dispute. They had two ballots and both ballots at Kellingley were in excess of 80%, both ballots, and the result was in my view total victory. It is an example, comrades, of what can be achieved if things are done correctly for the right reasons. It is amazing what can be done when we stick together.

But I'll tell you what, the role again of UK Coal, in particular with the men at Selby complex, at the various collieries, who wanted to transfer, has been absolutely despicable. I have got to say the National Executive Committee, the Secretary and myself have stood firm on flexible working. We had an NEC meeting. We then decided to have a sub-committee and what the Union said was simple, we could never envisage any flexible working in the industry which would increase production at the same time as UK Coal were putting 5,000 men on the dole.

The principle was abhorrent and that is why the Union stood by its opposition to flexible working. There are men being put on the dole and other men being asked to work extra hours in order to cover them. The principle absolutely stinks, comrades.

The Kellingley Branch have maintained their rights under the agreement, and this agreement has been in force since 1947, and by organised action and the way in which the officials looked after the men and the way the men responded to the officials – plenty of conversations, plenty of branch meetings, coming in to see Steve at the Yorkshire Area Office, getting the right advice – I think that is why we achieved so much in terms of what we have at Kellingley and it is a great credit to those people. (*Applause*)

I want to say something very briefly on the transferees, the people who are being asked to transfer to Kellingley. The message is simple, comrades, and the Union will do everything in its power to ensure that those men who are transferred and permanent night shift is their only option – three 12 hour shifts or not too dissimilar to that, on a week by week basis – we will do our damndest to ensure that we can get them the same sort of wages, the same conditions, terms and wages as the men have at Kellingley. We are currently working on that. We have not been helped by the fact that certain press releases have been given to newspapers who quite frankly have opposed the mining industry and the mining unions for generations, but this Union's commitment to every one of those people is one hundred percent rock solid. We don't want people to be working permanent nights while other people at the colliery are working a four or five day shift system. We have had a meeting already and we have expressed our views. We have asked them to look at the situation of integrating men from the Selby coalfield into the same shift pattern at Kellingley as the Kellingley men themselves. We have not had any response from that. Comrades, I want just for a minute to look to our future prospects. The future for Britain's energy requirements as laid down in the Energy White Paper fails to address the pending energy crisis. There is not a role for coal, there is not a role for nuclear, we are facing the extinction of the indigenous gas supplies and there's an acceptance that it's okay that Britain will be a net importer of energy by 2020. By the year 2020 we will be importing, if the White Paper is right, 90 percent of our energy requirements – 90 percent – 70 percent of which will be gas. This will be coming from the most politically unstable countries, politically unstable nations, throughout the world, from Saudi Arabia, from Iraq, Iran, from North Africa, from the former Soviet Union. The way it will be delivered is in a huge pipeline and we in Britain will be at the very end of that pipeline. It could be turned down or turned off like that. Is that any way to try and secure the future needs of Britain? I think not. We need security of supply. We are self sufficient. We have got the coal reserves,

and yet the government's White Paper indicates that we should be looking to import rather than keep our indigenous reserves. Is it not right that we should as a nation employ people to extract our energy, keeping people in employment, securing the supply which we need for business, for hospitals, for schools? Of course it is, and that again is an argument which is being pursued through the NUM with the government.

As a Union we have highlighted these problems on numerous occasions and I would hope that you have all had the opportunity of seeing the submission the NUM put forward for the Energy White Paper, and since then we have published a post Energy White Paper document highlighting the problems, because there have been huge problems even since the White Paper was published, huge changes. Coal, for example, now is better placed in Britain than it has been for decades. We have got the highest international price we have had for years. The import levels are difficult to sustain and mainly this is due to the expansion and the industrialisation of China. We have seen a reduction in opencast sites, the meltdown of the nuclear industry, extinction of indigenous gas reserves, and oil at the highest price ever, and that is as we speak this morning.

Comrades, the reality is that the British deep mine coal industry is very, very, very profitable, very, very, very competitive, but it will not survive unless it is taken back into public ownership.

The future of the industry looks as bleak as ever. It is not about being competitive, it is about profit making at optimum levels. Not just making a profit but making a huge profit, and we have the argument, "*Well we could put that money in a building society and we could make more*". This is one of the arguments that is pushed in the face of the Union, the Union members and the employees on every occasion. They are not after just profit making, it is profit making at optimum levels.

The question is, comrades, should the future of the British energy reserves be left to the vagaries of the free market? That is what is happening, and the answer to that, quite frankly, is no. When people go on about, "*We haven't got the money*", we are the third or fourth richest nation in the world. We have poured billions into Iraq – billions – and that is for energy. It is a war for energy in Iraq. Would it not be sensible to plough the taxpayers' money into securing our own energy reserves, into a national clean coal technology programme, rather than bomb, maim and kill innocent people, boys, girls, men and women in other nations, in order to steal their reserves? Would it not be right to put the money into our own indigenous industry?  
*(Applause)*

Comrades, if we look at the current political situation, there has been a complete realignment of British politics – everybody has moved to the right – and there are huge problems, there is a massive vacuum there. A lot of people say there isn't any difference between Labour, New Labour and the Tory government. People need to have some belief in the political system again. We have seen, because of that vacuum, the emergence of organisations such as the BNP and other far right racist parties. I will tell you what, it is about time that the government did ban those horrible, fascist people. A lot of people say, well it's the democratic process and they are entitled to their views. They are not entitled to views which are unacceptable in this age.

I was at a TUC Regional Conference four or five weeks ago in Newcastle and there was a National Front demonstration. Davey Guy was there with us. A National Front demonstration in the city of Newcastle. These people are thugs, young people

screaming abuse, yet the police and police horses had us cornered. It reminded us of the strike. They had Newcastle city centre cordoned off for the National Front for goodness sake, and we were asking "Is this right?" and I was threatened with arrest. I said "I really think, officer, you should be arresting the thugs you are protecting".

Anyway, that is the sort of situation we have in terms of politics, ordinary people are becoming alienated and disenfranchised. They need policies which will involve them once again, or at least to think they have got a say in society. That is not happening today. Working people and trade unionists at this moment are considering the Labour/Trade Union link. I would be foolish not to mention it. The FBU last week severed their links with the Labour Party. The RMT is no longer affiliated to the Labour Party. Other organisations, other trade unions, are looking at their links with the Labour Party. Some of the larger ones are looking to reduce their affiliation fees rather than disaffiliate. I would not in any way, shape or form, support disaffiliation from the Labour Party at this time. No way would I do that, but I will tell you what I can understand, I can understand the likes of the FBU considering the breaking of the links. They were on strike, they were in dispute, and you had a Labour minister saying that he would bring in legislation to bring them into line. I will tell you what, you can expect that from the Tories but you cannot expect it from those we perceive to be our friends. You can understand the FBU doing that, you can really understand that situation.

The Labour Party has asked the trade union movement over the last few months to put £5 million up front for the next General Election. Well I am in support of that, but I really believe we should have some returns. If you give somebody £5 million you want returns. The argument is we cannot be asking for favours, it will be money for favours. What a load of tosh. If we are giving anybody £5 million then we should be able to have some say on the manifesto and some of the pledges put forward by that party, and that is certainly my view. If they want £5 million, comrades, we want, not favours, but we want an input.

Comrades, looking back at this Union, I am extremely proud that this Union still is a national institution in the communities. There are people here who are not working in the pits any more, but I tell you what, they do a tremendous job in the community, a tremendous job assisting elderly people, assisting people on anything, not necessarily related to the industry, because the old branch secretary, the old committee man, they are the ones who they have their trust in, and in places like Durham which was decimated in 1992, 1995, Durham has a tremendous network, for example, in all those villages. They have got representatives here, there and everywhere looking after the needs of our members and of our former members. The same can be said for Yorkshire. We have representatives here whose sole duty is to do that. They are not being paid for it, they do it because we are, as I have said, a national institution, and because of their efforts, because of a lot of people's efforts in here, the NUM has been successful in the highest personal injury award in the history of this country. When everybody gets paid for Vibration White Finger and Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema the bill will have totalled somewhere in excess of £8 billion. I will say that had it not been for the Labour Government those payments would not have been made.

My contribution today, comrades, has expressed the reality of the world in which we currently exist. Our industry faces total extinction because of Thatcherite free market forces and free market policies, and the wholesale disregard of the ordinary British public and indeed their future. Comrades, I am steadfastly proud of our

achievements over the years, the struggles and the battles that this Union has fought, the attacks against the capitalist society whose only objective relates to the rich to the detriment of the poor. This Union has a magnificent tradition for struggle and political justice. In these difficult times people quite often turn inwards against each other rather than outwards against the darker forces which continue to exploit their labours.

Comrades, let's stick together like nothing before and nothing will move the National Union of Mineworkers. *(Applause)*

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CHAIRMAN: Comrades, the next thing on the agenda is the Report of the Business Committee. Can I invite Keith Stanley to present the Conference Business Committee Report?

### **REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

MR K STANLEY (NEC): Mr Chairman, delegates, the Conference Business Committee has prepared a programme and timetable for the conduct of Conference business. This has been circulated to delegates this morning. I trust delegates have had the opportunity to read this and will accept the timetable, together with the report.

We are recommending that the business of Conference shall begin at 10 am until 12.45 pm, and then reconvene at 2 pm until 4.30 pm, the completion of normal business.

The Business Committee recommends that Standing Order 11 relating to the limit for speeches be adhered to, so that all matters before Conference can be fully debated.

The Business Committee is proposing that Conference be held in Private Session on Sunday morning for delegates only, therefore visitors, guests and the press will not be allowed into this session.

If delegates will now turn to page A6 of the final agenda as printed and circulated, Rule Amendment 1 stands. Motions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 stand. With the agreement of the South Wales Area and the North East Area, Motions 7 and 8 have been composited into Composite A, which has been circulated to delegates this morning. Composite A will be moved by the North East Area and seconded by the South Wales Area. Motions 9 and 10 stand.

If delegates will now turn to page A14 of the final agenda as printed and circulated, there is one motion rule change that has been excluded and that decision stands.

The nominations for officers and representatives are set out on pages A16 to A18, as your printed agenda. As all the nominations are unopposed we do not consider it necessary for voting papers to be issued but the tellers will be invited to give a formal report to Conference.

Normal facilities have been granted to the media and, as usual, I would remind the press that they do not in any way obstruct the business of Conference and that photographers ensure that they return to their places once they have taken their pictures.

Mr Chairman, delegates, on behalf of the Business Committee I move acceptance of this report.